Harmful effect of Higher Nickel Content in Chocolates

315. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

KUMARI ALIA:

CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Environment Research Laboratory at Lucknow has conducted a study of some leading brands of chocolates manufactured in the country;

(b) whether a number of them have been found to contain nickel above the permissive level; and

(c) if so, whether this can be very harmful to children particularly, rendering them vulnerable to various infections and dreaded diseases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. D. K. THARADEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) to (c) No such study has come to the notice of the Directorate General of Health Services indicating that some leading brands of chocolates manufactured in the country have any content of nickel.

Lacunae in N. D. P. S. Act

316. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Operation Research Group Survey on drug abuse in the country's four metropolitan cities has found that judges and other experts from concerned disciplines have felt that the inflexibility of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act was proving counterproductive to tackle the menace;

(b) if so, what are the lacunae found in the existing Act; and

(c) the effective measures being taken to give more teeth to the Act in the light of the above study?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Welfare had commissioned a survey on the subject by the Operations Research Group. They have very recently received the report and are examining it. Appropriate action will be taken after the examination is complete.

Powers to States under the forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

317. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the States have not been given any power under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

(b) whether State Governments have represented to the Central Government in this regard;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to delegate some powers under the Forest (Conservation) Act to the States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH):

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Relaxations and simplification in the rules and guidelines have already been made to expedite approval of clearances under the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980. This is in keeping with the recommendations made in the State Forest Ministers' Conference held in 1989 which favoured simplification of procedure and delegation to the Regional Offices of the Ministry which has been carried out. In the circumstances no delegation of powers is necessary.